

Religious Intelligencer.

"THAT GOD IN ALL THINGS MAY BE GLORIFIED THROUGH JESUS CHRIST."—Peter.

VOL. XXXIII.—No. 9.

SAINT JOHN, N. B., WEDNESDAY, MARCH 3, 1886.

WHOLE No. 1672

Our Contributors.

HEALTHY CHURCHES.

Nothing is more important. We say, it is a great blessing to be favored with a healthy body. But it is a greater blessing, and it is the greatest of all blessings to have a well soul. Spiritual health is as clear and as conclusive in its operations as bodily health. Each is subject to and governed by laws. If a church is right in its beginning—if well born—there is no good reason why (I was about to say) it may not live forever. That which is most important, not the creed, but the life, is eternal. Such a church is the grandest institution on earth, and its great mission of glorifying God will by no means cease here, but continue with accelerated energy into the eternities.

It is of greatest importance that the health of the church be now carefully guarded else by some blighting malady it may cease to live and become utterly extinct. And vigilance here becomes doubly imperative since there are so many wasting and fatal diseases to which she is subject, and many of these plagues are so insidious in their coming and so complicated withal that the best skill is frequently baffled in its endeavor to effect a cure. Churches need to be fortified against error as much as ever. Strength must be husbanded and the spiritual body kept clean and the air pure. Churches may and do suffer from moral paralysis, low temperature, weakness of knees in going forward in the path of duty, lame backs when burdens are to be borne, indistinct hearing even when the voice of God is around us and the air filled with the cry of the lost, poor sight when danger is near, loss of appetite for the word of life and religious literature, poor digestion of truth even though fed with milk, and a general decadence of robust moral health. It is possible to be so far gone that faith, and hope, and courage, and love are well nigh departed, and action, if not entirely ceased, may be alarmingly sluggish.

"Can churches so far gone be restored to health and vigor?" Not by tonics or by any quack medicine is it possible; but by the grace of God and according to the Divine prescription they can. All sin shall be forgiven except the sin against the Holy Ghost. Repentance toward God always brings life and the joys of salvation. This is the Divine order in the kingdom of grace. But repentance implies consciousness of one's state, godly sorrow for sin, confession of sin to God and to all others whom we have wronged, and an utter renouncing or forsaking of wrong doing. Thus are we restored to the liberty of the sons of God and regain our health. And when the individual or the church regains that which was lost the evidences of life will be apparent.

Some of the results of a church in spiritual health are, the following: Living faith in God, zeal according to knowledge in His cause, humility and sanctified purpose in action, hope that maketh not ashamed in effort, and above all a supreme love to God and a charity that suffereth long and is kind to all His children. A living, healthful church is always blessed with a good appetite for wholesome moral food. The Bread of Life is its staple diet. Such is one that runs no risks by depriving itself of the gospel, or of religious newspapers. Churches that aim to live and move and have a being by living upon themselves as a matter of pecuniary economy soon reveal symptoms of starvation, and unless skilful aid is furnished, death closes the scene. A healthy church always keeps its face toward the east, and its windows open. Such a church must have the light and heat of the moral sun; and a bad atmosphere it cannot endure. A living church always feels well, however laborious its work. Its members perform their duties singing with grace in their hearts to the Lord.

Beware, we ought, lest the peace which is not of God possess us. There is an appetite for food, and a feeling which sometimes indicates the absence of pain which are precursors of death. A little girl very ill from twenty-six days' suffering from scarlet fever, lay upon her couch in comparative freedom from pain. Her parents were filled with hope of her recovery. But

a little later she refused her accustomed nourishment and the pulse soon began to beat more slowly and weak. Hope was changed to alarm. Soon the appetite returned again and hope once more revived. But, alas! it was but the voracious appetite and the freedom from pain which, when interpreted aright, meant death, as it so proved. Let churches lying at ease beware lest, perchance, the lack of feeling now and the loss of desire for bread may return in some abnormal way when the soul may have become too far exhausted for spiritual restoration! B. A. SHERWOOD.

OLD-TIME REVIVALS.

"People can't be expected to go two miles to prayer-meeting in such a storm as this," said a daughter to her mother as she looked out in the twilight at the fast-falling snow.

"It looks rather forbidding," responded the mother, "but I have seen the time more than once when such weather would have been no hindrance to whole families going out not merely two but four miles, so intense was the interest, so deep the feeling in regard to the salvation of souls."

Memory awakened by this conversation ran back at will over years in the far past, recalling scenes of the then, in comparison with the now.

But before attempting to outline what memory brought up in review, the reader will allow a digression. The writer is not in sympathy with those who mourn over the degeneracy of the present age as compared with the past. We live in a wonderful age—an age of wonderful opportunities, of wonderful developments. God has opened to His church the largest possibilities of success. On every hand the whitened fields invite the reapers. Yet now, as ever, they must go forth remembering that "it is not by might nor by power," but by the Holy Spirit their work can prove effective. The Master of the harvest can alone "give the increase."

Is it not possible that in this day of enlarged opportunities, we have lost sight, in a measure, of the absolute dependency upon the miraculous work of the Spirit in quickening professed Christians and converting sinners, substituting in its place a kind of religious machinery, a routine of revival efforts, in too many instances, alas! like the armor of Saul upon the stripling David? Will not some one wise in biblical research and interpretation, rich in Christian experience, of wide observation of the workings of God in His church in all ages, tell us whether or no a new spiritual era has opened upon us—whether new methods have been revealed for the conversion of souls? But perhaps it is all of "one Spirit," but manifested in a different way.

A revival which occurred in my native town in Eastern Connecticut when I was a child is distinctly remembered. It was in the spring-time, and the events of a Sunday morning come distinctly to mind. The reverend pastor arose, named the hymn, and commenced to read—
"Joy to the world, the Lord is come,
Let earth receive her King,
When His feelings so overcame him that he could proceed no further and sat down burying his face in his hands. Child as I was, I felt as if the "place was holy ground." After the singing the pastor read from Solomon's songs, 2d chapter, tenderly emphasizing the 11th and 12th verses, "For lo, the winter is past, and the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, and the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land."

Of the sermon I remember little, except his feeling reference to the glad news which came to him from every quarter of revivals, mentioning particularly the reclaiming of backsliders and conversion of sinners in other parts of the town; and his exhortation to the members of his own church to be prepared for the work of the Lord. A hushed, solemn influence seemed to pervade every heart. No excitement was manifested, but it was apparent that every heart responded, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

It was a country town—the members of the church and congregation were scattered over a wide extent from the meeting-house in every direction. It was the season when farmers must be ploughing and sowing if they would expect a harvest. And their work went on, but not to the neglect of the work of the Lord. As did the workmen on

the walls of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's time, working with one hand, while the other held a weapon. Meetings were appointed in different neighborhoods to better accommodate the people, but wherever it was, there was the attractive point for all who could possibly get there.

Church-members were fully aroused. Old jealousies and bickerings were confessed, buried and forgotten, and unbelievers of all classes and ages were asking how they could be saved. Asking so earnestly that it did not evaporate so soon as outside the place of prayer, nor so heartlessly as to be ashamed to acknowledge it before their indifferent or scoffing associates. The Holy Spirit wrought in them an entire transformation, so that their lives gave evidence that they had passed from death to life.

This work continued through the spring and summer. Sixty were added to that one country church by baptism, and of that number I can recall but two that did not remain steadfast. Many became pillars in that and other churches, for, like the disciples of old, they went everywhere carrying the light of life. The other churches in the town shared equally in the influences and results of that visitation of the Spirit. And the same may be said of the adjoining towns, for it was a year of the special outpouring of divine grace.

As I think of it now, the whole seems in exact accordance with the illustrations of Scripture to the work of the Spirit: "I will come down like rain upon the mown grass, like showers that water the earth." "The Spirit poured from on high." "As the lightning whose source cannot be traced," so is every one that is born of the Spirit. "The times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

The pastor, the church-members and the converts seemed to be the God-ordained evangelists to carry forward the work; and earnestly, faithfully did they labor, and mightily did the Spirit work through them. The whole community was pervaded with the solemn, yet joyful influence. Mirth and trifling had no place. The salvation of souls, heaven, hell, life, death, eternity were the absorbing subjects. The air and bearing of every person, Christian or not, evinced a consciousness that God was in the place; that it was holy ground.

There was no Sankey to thrill the congregations with revival songs, but I remember the veteran Karen missionary, Justus H. Vinton—long since dead—then but a stripling youth, who, with his sisters, came occasionally from their home in an adjoining town to attend meeting on Sunday and some other times. As singers I have never heard any that rival them, and their full, clear, expressive, impressive rendering of those old hymns seem still, after a lapse of sixty years, to linger in my ears and thrill my soul. Laid on the shelf now, and considered almost obsolete, are:

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent word."

"Come, ye sinners, poor and wretched,
Lost and ruined by the fall,
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity joined with power."

He is willing—doubt no more."

"Day of judgment, day of wonders!
Hark! the trumpet's awful sound,
Louder than a thousand thunders,
Shakes the vast creation round;
How the summons
Will the sinner's heart confound!"

Yet they were made the arrows of conviction, and ministers of comfort, to many souls.—Mrs. Clarke, in Standard.

RELIGION AS A CAUSE OF INSANITY.

Religion, strange to say, is sometimes set down as a cause of insanity, and we have the expression religious insanity, as a current idea. To some it means that a person is insane on the subject of religion; to others that insanity was caused by religion. What people talk about when they become insane has rarely anything to do with the real cause of the disease. In all ages of the world, the system of faith and doctrine of the time respecting man's spiritual being have been the comfort and solace of the loftiest minds in the contemplation of the ills of this life, as well those of the unlearned.

Religion can in no sense be charged with producing insanity. Suppose a person attends a religious meeting day after day and night after night, and finally becomes insane? It is true that insanity, in some instances, though rarely, follows after such attendance and the consequent excitement and mental strain. As I have said at another point, so do rheumatism, colds, and pneumonia.

In such instances it is the exposure and neglect of food, loss of sleep, excessive physical activity without rest, which break down the general health and induce various diseases, insanity included. I know that the history of the world shows that sometimes a whole neighborhood gets into a state of excitement, and the madness seems to be universal. This is not insanity, but faatual and hysterical excitement; it is no more true madness than the ex-

citement gradually wrought up on political questions, until at length we have the fury, rage, and brutality of a mob, and the fearful tragedies of Nihilism and revolutionary violence.

More feelings and emotions, or the madness of passion, are not disease, nor of themselves the producers of disease.

Some years ago a woman was brought to the asylum in a state of profound melancholy, her mind dwelling wholly on spiritual subjects. She had resorted to fasting and prayer in the delusive expectation that her only child, who had died, might be brought to life. She had before this given herself up to grief and indifference to duty; had got away from her home and spent whole nights kneeling on the grave of this child. Was it strange that her health should at last give way, and that she should sink into mental derangement?

Many years ago a young minister preached two sermons every Sunday, superintended a Sabbath-school, held two or three meetings a week in his church, wrote for the religious press, visited as pastor the members of a large congregation, limited his food, and trenched by study upon the hours of sleep. He finally failed in health and passed into acute mania, raving only on the subject of religion; lost his own identity; declared himself Zerubbabel; that he was appointed of God to preach "to the spirits in prison;" that he had descended into hell, and there had preached the gospel of salvation and redemption. This was not religious insanity, but insanity from exhaustion, religion having nothing to do with it except to give tone and character to his delusions. He recovered and spent a long and useful life as a conservative minister of the Gospel. A distinguished lawyer, whose labors and privations broke him down in health, passed into profound melancholia, declared that he had ruined his family, and that his soul was lost.

Would you charge this to religion, to law, or to exhaustion?

The only comment to be made upon such cases is, that they should not occur. They are all plainly within the scope of preventive measures. No such neglect and abuse of simple laws of health are justified, certainly not at this day. There are men and women all around us, in this city, and perhaps in this audience, who have stood at the furthest verge of mental unbalance; depressed in spirits, everything about them clouded, suicidal thoughts coming and going, but who, being assured that impaired health was at the bottom of their misery, were willing to submit themselves to enforced eating, quiet, and rest, and necessary medication in hope of restoration, and who could testify that when health was regained their delusive ideas vanished "as a dream when one awaketh."—Dr. John P. Gray.

LIBRARY OF THE LONDON BIBLE HOUSE.

Here the first thing which claims attention is the venerable Malagasy Bible, one of those buried out of sight during the cruel persecution under Queen Ranavalona, which began in 1835, when the profession of Christianity and the possession of Christian books were made punishable with imprisonment, slavery, or even death. It is indeed a precious relic, highly prized by its owner, whose marks, still visible on the margin, were evidently intended to guide his eye to texts which he meant to preach from or refer to. The original copy must have been so worn by frequent use that several portions of different sizes were stitched together with it. It may have belonged to that noble army of martyrs who with such unflinching courage endured torture and death rather than abandon their faith in Christ.

Close by this is another Bible, with a more peaceful, but no less important, history. It is the very book that Mary Jones, the Welsh girl, after she had trudged so many miles to obtain one, purchased from Mr. Charles, of Bala. The circumstances suggested to him and others the necessity for a Bible Society, and led to its formation. Truly God hangs heavy weights on slender wires. This one copy of the Holy Scriptures was the tiny mustard seed whence there has sprung this noble institution, now like a great tree, under whose branches so many nations have found shelter and refreshment. There is something deeply touching in the simple record roughly inscribed on the blank leaf:

"Born 16th December, 1784.

"I bought this in the 16th year of my age. I am the daughter of John Jones and Mary Jones his wife. The Lord may give me grace. Amen.

Very appropriately are the portrait of Mr. Charles, and a view of his house and shop placed beside it. Such was the beginning of this work eighty-one years ago, and on the moveable book-stands, with glazed wings, we see its marvellous progress illustrated by specimens of Bibles in about 260 differ-

ent languages or dialects, so that we are ready to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!"

But the other precious treasures lie spread out before us. We can glance only at a few. The Jewish roll of the Law has a history of its own. It was found in a cave near Damascus, and it is thought to be from 300 to 400 years old, and is composed of some sixty sheepskins.

That Spanish New Testament might pass unnoticed were we not told its pathetic origin. It is one of 3,000 copies, produced by a Protestant printer, who worked by lamplight in a cellar at Malaga during the reign of the persecuting Isabella, at the risk of liberty and life. The confinement and his solitary, unaided labors so undermined his health that he died early of consumption. Very precious must the gospel have been to his own heart. Such self-sacrificing efforts to make it known to others can hardly have been without fruit. Still more remarkable and valuable as a literary curiosity is that very old book. It is a palimpsest, and consists of two books, written one over the other on the same vellum, an instance of economy not unusual in early times. When first found, it appeared to be only a work of the twelfth century, containing lessons on the gospels by various writers; but close investigations proved it to have been originally part of St. Luke's Gospel, transcribed about 500 A. D., in uncial Greek, and as being found in the Island of Zante, it is known as the Codex Zacynthius. How strikingly it illustrates the way in which the Word of God, though for a time obscured by human glosses and traditions, re-asserts itself as the only infallible authority.

It is a surprising and most cheering fact that during the eighty-one years of its existence the society has put into circulation upwards of 100,000,000 of copies of the Holy Scriptures, in about 260 languages or dialects. At the present time 30,000 copies of the Holy Scriptures are sent out each week, or about 5,000 every day.—The Quiver.

Among Our Exchanges.

CONTAGIOUS.

Revival-fire is contagious. If you have it, others with whom you come in contact will catch it.—Telescope.

GIVE THEM THE BEST.

There is no minister whose congregation is so small that is not worth the best he has to offer.—Christian Register.

A FRAUD.

A cunning, wire-working preacher is a self-contradiction. Think of an ambitious, unscrupulous man—a man who loves money, and seeks notoriety and power, at the expense of conscience—think of him as pastor in charge of the spiritual interests of the people.—Holston Methodist.

A DISTURBER.

The unsettled man unsettles all around him. He is like a peevish infant whose imaginary ailments make a household miserable. Will he please cease being a peevish baby in the church of God? He is too big for tender handling, and we have other occupation than soothing his meaningless and idiotical grief.—Northwestern Advocate.

THE NEED.

It is a morbid appetite which longs for amusement, or mere intellectual entertainment in the house of God. What men need is to hear of faith and a holy life. After the burdens, responsibilities and anxieties of this week, nothing is so restful and helpful as the simple truth as it is in Jesus. Men delight to be pointed away from the fatigue and disappointment of earth to the peace and satisfaction afforded by the gospel.—Presbyterian.

A NEW FORM.

In England, as in our own country, there are many members of Pedobaptist churches who do not believe in sprinkling babes. To meet the scruples of such, a ceremony has been prepared by an English clergyman for the "dedication and benediction of children." We have received a leaflet containing this service. It consists of a simple form of consecration. The baptismal form declares that the subject is really "a child of God and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven," this only expresses a devout hope "that he may grow up in all virtue and holiness."—Baptist Weekly.

A FRAID.

The papers are passing around, in their humorous columns, the following statement: "There is a man at Middletown, N. Y., who is so afraid that he may do wrong that he does not dare to do right." But, in all seriousness, there are too many men of just that sort. It is often given as an excuse for not seeking a religious life, and entering the church: "I am afraid I will not be able to live just right, and I will only add another to the list of unworthy professors." There are hundreds of men and women who persuade themselves that they are moved by the fear of doing wrong, but who persistently refuse to do what conscience tells them is right.—Advocate.

ALL SORTS.

The Senate of Kentucky has passed a bill establishing a whipping-post for wife-beaters.

A mechanical dentist, operated by electricity, is a recent invention. It extracts seven teeth in five minutes, with comparatively little pain to the patient.

The Japanese Mail gives currency to a rouble the Russian Government has resolved on setting apart a sum of 100,000 roubles every year for missionary work in Corea.

Horse-shoes in Japan are simply clogs of twisted straw; and, on a journey, a number of them have to be carried, to be bound on as fast as the old ones wear out.

The substitution of glass flooring for boards continues to increase in Paris, this being especially the case in those business structures in which the cellars are used as offices.

Needles were made at Nuremberg as early as 1370. They were of steel, and much the same as we see now. The early Egyptian needles were bronze, and these were preceded by needles of bone.

The Osservatore Romano states, as the result of the estimates made by the various missions, that the total number of members of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the world is between 275,000,000 and 300,000,000.

A Japanese inventor has discovered a means of making paper from seaweed. It is thick in texture, and, from its transparency, can be substituted for glass in windows, and, when colored, makes an excellent imitation of stained glass.

"Blessed candles" are to be part of the furniture of every Roman Catholic household in Baltimore. They are blessed once a year by a priest, and the Catholic Mirror says that "every Catholic family is expected to keep at least two blessed candles in the house for use in case of sickness."

The theory that one ring grows upon a tree every year is contradicted by the agricultural department at Washington, which finds that trees of six years showed twelve rings; of twelve, twenty-one; of five, eleven; and of twenty-four, twenty; the trees being respectively locust, hickory, crabapple and oak.

The late Paul Baudry, being asked why, in his famous decorations of the Paris Opera House, he chose the daughter of Herodias as the embodiment of the art of dancing, replied: "Because her dance ended in a demand for John the Baptist's head; and, for my part, I have a prejudice against dancing; the end is always bad."

For the benefit of those who are seeking great fortunes in the Bank of England or in great English estates, a correspondent of the Evening Post quotes the following from Paul to Titus, iii, 9: "But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain."

A school of poor children, having read in the Bible the denunciation against hypocrites who "strain at a gnat and swallow a camel," were afterwards examined by a benevolent patroness as to their recollection of the chapter. "What in particular was the sin of the Pharisees, children?" said the lady. "Ating camels, my lady," was the prompt reply.

There has been another exposure of spiritualistic fraud. This time it is the celebrated, much-lauded medium, Henry Slade. At Weston, West Virginia, he was, according to the Boston Herald, detected in writing on the slate with his own hand the messages said to have been written by departed spirits.

An eminent German oculist, Dr. H. Cohn, has made extensive researches into the effects of study and microscopic labor on the eyes; and he concluded that reading and writing are much more likely to produce shortsightedness and otherwise impair the sight than watch-making and other minute industries.

A French paper declares that two Parisian women entered into a contest to determine which of them could talk the fastest. A mutual friend was appointed umpire, and the sum of 1,000 francs was to go to the victor. For three hours they read from Eugene Sue's feuilletons, and during that time the victor succeeded in pronouncing 296,311 words. Her adversary came in a bad second with 203,500 words.

It would tax the imagination of even Daniel Defoe, were he still among us, to conceive a more thrilling story than that of Elizabeth Mount drifting about on the sea in the smack Columbine. She was going to Lerwick, in the Shetland Islands, to obtain medical relief, when the captain having fallen overboard, the two men who formed the crew sought to rescue him in a boat. But the smack, with the woman, who was sixty-five, drifted to sea, and for eight days was at the mercy of the wind and the waves, until fallen in with off the coast of Norway.